



## **NOAA Coastal Services Center**

LINKING PEOPLE, INFORMATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

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# **MAINE COAST PROTECTION INITIATIVE**

## **Protecting coastal Maine through collaboration and technical capacity building**

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Local conservation communities are vital to the success of protecting coastal resources; this idea was embraced in Maine, where over 70 nonprofit organizations are working together to bolster efforts to preserve the unique character of Maine's coast. This work is being accomplished through shared goals and activities that prioritize and address strategic habitat protection, coastal access, and scenic watershed preservation.

As a core partner in the Maine Coast Protection Initiative (MCPI), the NOAA Coastal Services Center supported the strategic conservation planning process, provided funding, and provided technical support to increase the geospatial capacity of the local land trusts.

### **Using Technology as a Bridge to Collaboration**

One important component in bringing the diverse partners together was the use of technology. Geographic information system (GIS) mapping provided an entry point for many of the partners to collaborate, helping to bring groups together along Maine's coast.

The Center filled a key role in continuing to build the technical capacity of Maine's coastal land trusts by supporting the development of spatial resources needed for collaborative and strategic conservation planning. To determine the technical needs of the land trusts, the Center first conducted a GIS needs assessment that led to the establishment of four GIS service centers. These service centers provide coastal land trusts with mapping services, data, and training. The Center also developed standard data bundles and provided initial GIS instruction and conservation data documentation training. Equipping land trusts with GIS tools and skills helps them better address coastal conservation challenges by providing a spatial approach to decision making that uses relevant, MCPI-produced data sets.

The lessons learned through this process can be applied to others working to increase collaborative conservation. The Center produced lessons learned documents on collaborative and strategic coastal conservation and GIS capacity building.

**To Learn More**, contact the NOAA Coastal Services Center's Lori Cary-Kothera at (843) 740-1243 or [Lori.Cary-Kothera@noaa.gov](mailto:Lori.Cary-Kothera@noaa.gov), or visit <http://csc.noaa.gov/id/mcpiIntro.html>.